suitable entities for induction as strategic partners. Several leading exchanges, including New York Stock Exchange and NASDAQ, have visited them recently for making a preliminary assessment in this regard. However, the SEBI regulations specify that no person shall, directly or indirectly, acquire or hold more than five percent in the paid up equity capital of a recognised stock exchange.

(d) The BSE have informed that tie-up with large global exchanges as strategic partner would enable them to enhance their competitive strength in the market in terms of product innovation, larger participation by institutional holders, technology up gradation and global practices and processes.

Suicides by farmers

2169. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of farmers who have committed suicides being unable to pay the loan amount, during the period for the last six months, State-wise;

(b) the total amount that has not been paid by such farmers during this period, State-wise;

(c) whether such loans are granted without investigating and identifying usual conditions of the farmers; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Central Government for the protection of the life of poor common man particularly a farmer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) Indebtness from formal and informal sources is only one of the many reasons for suicides by farmers. The reasons behind the suicides by the farmers are many. Excessive borrowing from formal and non-formal sources, social tension, continuous drought affecting the yield and their income, emerging changes in social milieu and alienation of the individuals from family and society are some of the major reasons reported for the distress situation of the farmers leading to suicide.

However, to address the issue of farmer's distress, the Govt. of India has announced a rehabilitation package in the identified 31 debt stressed districts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra. The package provide for:

(i) The entire interest on overdue loans as on July 01, 2006 will be waived in all the affected districts and all farmers will have no past interest burden as on that date, so that they will immediately be eligible for fresh loans from the banking system.

(ii) The overdue loans of the farmers as on July 01, 2006 will be rescheduled over a period of 3-5 years with a one-year moratorium.

(iii) A credit flow of Rs. 13,817.78 crore, Rs. 3,076.20 crore, Rs. 1,945.07 crore and Rs. 1275 crores will be ensured in the above debt stressed districts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra respectively in 2006-07.

Violation of import rules by companies

†2170. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that certain companies are violating import rules by utilizing imported items in domestic market without paying any duty on them;

(b) whether DGCE has taken action against any of these companies in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) DGCEI has taken action under the Central Excise Act, 1944 and the rules made thereunder against the defaulting companies. Details of such cases and the action taken against such companies is given in the enclosed Statement.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.